

You have the ability to safeguard Chesterfield County's water resources.



As a riparian landowner, you benefit from enjoying Chesterfield County's plentiful water resources in your own backyard. "Riparian" refers to the land area adjacent to a body of water. Riparian buffers are vegetated strips bordering the edges of streams, rivers and lakes that benefit both the landowner and our water resources. As a riparian landowner, you have the ability to enhance your riparian buffer to improve your quality of life, the quality of life of future county residents, and water quality from Chesterfield County to the Chesapeake Bay.

Green Screen

Mature vegetation increases your property's value by enhancing privacy, providing shade, absorbing noise from waterfront activities and reducing costly lawn maintenance. Vegetated buffers filter stormwater runoff and reduce the amount of fertilizers, pet waste and sediment that enter waterways.

Deeply Rooted

The root systems of trees and other plants lock soil in place and protect stream banks from erosion, preventing property loss and sedimentation.

Aesthetic Appeal

Buffers with native plants provide year-round color and beauty with little to no maintenance. They also provide habitat for wildlife including bald eagles, songbirds and butterflies.

From Chesterfield to the Chesapeake

Did you know that all waterways in Chesterfield County drain to the Chesapeake Bay? Every creek and lake in the county flows to the James River, which flows to the bay. The actions we take in our backyards have a direct impact on the health of a national treasure!

The Riparian Stewardship Program is sponsored by the Chesterfield County Environmental Engineering Department and Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront, with financial support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. For more information about riparian buffers, visit chesterfieldriverfront.org.



Healthy riparian buffers contain a mix of trees, shrubs and native grasses.



Unhealthy buffers lack a mix of trees, shrubs and ground cover.



Riparian buffers separate water from surrounding land uses.



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community through excellence
in public service



The views and conclusions in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions and policies of the U.S. Government or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

How do *You* view your stream, lake or river?

Naturally vegetated buffers contain a mix of trees, shrubs and native grasses. Lawns maintained to the water's edge can be transformed into a healthy buffer by simply creating a "no-mow" zone or by planting native trees and shrubs. Rather than clear cutting your riparian buffer or mowing to the water's edge to create a view of your stream, river or lake, you can selectively prune to provide a window to the water. A balanced combination of view and vegetated buffer result in an attractive home and a sustainable environment. There are regulations for the management of riparian buffers. Please see the other side of this card for details.

Small Steps, Big Impact

Riparian buffers are an economical way to address many water-quality concerns in Chesterfield County. If the majority of riparian landowners in Chesterfield County took steps to enhance their riparian buffers, it would make a big, positive impact on our water resources.

Riparian Stewardship Fund

Riparian landowners in Chesterfield County who are interested in making enhancements to their riparian buffers are invited to apply for assistance through the Riparian Stewardship Fund. Please visit our Web site at chesterfieldriverfront.org to complete an application for assistance. The Riparian Stewardship Fund provides native trees and shrubs to landowners who are interested in improving the quality of their buffers.



Are there any laws or ordinances protecting riparian buffers in Chesterfield County?

In accordance with state law, Chesterfield County has a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance that requires protective measures for lands known as resource protection areas, or RPAs. An RPA includes a 100-foot-wide buffer adjacent to water bodies such as a perennial (flowing year-round) stream, river or lake. The regulation applies to both private and public property in Chesterfield County.

There are things that can and cannot occur in an RPA. New construction, clear cutting, establishing lawns, and digging or disturbing soils are prohibited in an RPA. With approval, water dependent structures such as docks and piers, trails, and selectively pruning vegetation for reasonable sight lines are permitted. Homeowners must receive approval from the Chesterfield County Environmental Engineering Department before performing any work in an RPA. For more information and to learn if you have an RPA on your property, please call 804-748-1035.

My buffer is in good shape, but I am interested in helping others!

Please consider joining Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront as a Riparian Stewardship Program member. More than half of your membership contribution will be directly contributed to the Riparian Stewardship Fund and will go to help other Chesterfield County residents make improvements to their riparian buffers.

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